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Nº. XX.

*Memoir on the Subject of a new Plant, growing in Pennsylvania, particularly in the Vicinity of Philadelphia,
by Mr. BEAUVOIS.*

Read August 21, 1795. **A**MONG the many observations I have hitherto made on the natural productions of this country, there is one which appears worthy of being presented to you. This I do after having often repeated my observations on the plant both in the fields and in my own chamber, where I have preserved it these two months.

The first time I saw this plant, was near Wilmington in a ditch continually wet, since which I have found it between Reading and Pottsgrove, and latterly near this city, where it is very common, growing as it were under our eyes; we trample it under our feet; the cattle feed greedily on it, and yet it is unknown among botanists, none of whom having published any description of it. Whether it possesses any medicinal virtues or not I cannot say. I have many times tasted it, and always found it insipid.

Although the silence of botanists on so common a plant, authorises me to present it to you as a discovery of my own, yet I shall not attach so high a value to the

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pretended

pretended merit of being the first discoverer of any production to which chance might as well have directed the steps of the most ignorant as those of the most learned naturalists, as to withhold from you any thing I know relative to the subject. Dr. Barton, with whom I spoke on my return from Wilmington, informed me that Mr. Muhlenberg had mentioned it in his catalogue of plants, under the name of *Ixia* followed by ? that it has since been sent to England to Mr. Smith, by the name of *Bartonia clandestina*, that this English botanist thinks it a new genus. Probably it has been but imperfectly examined by those who sent it to Mr. Smith, since they themselves surname it *clandestina*. Nor has Mr. Smith himself published any description thereof. We may then regard it as a new plant not described in any work.

In my opinion, this plant should be placed in the same class with the *Pontederia*, to which it seems very nearly related in the natural order. I will not hesitate then to place it with the *Narcissi*, class III. order VII. according to Jussieu's method. But this naturalist has himself seen the genus *Pontederia*, as well as many others, which he has designated as not having a perfect affinity with the *narcissi*, *genera narcissis non omnino affinia*, ought to be separated from them; and that he only places them thus until their proper order shall be determined, *donec horum verus ordo constiterit*. I shall only then, at present, show the place of the new plant I have the honour to present you. It cannot be classed with the *narcissi*, for it is wanting in one of their principal characters, viz. that of having six stamens. The difference in the number of stamens has not however, Gentlemen, determined me to make a new genus of it instead of uniting it with the *pontederia*; for if it only differed from it in this respect, it might as well belong to the *pontederia*, as the *valeriana rubra*, *calcarata*, and *cornucopiae*, to the *valerianæ*, the two

first

first having but one stamen and the third but two, three being the proper number in the valeriana. But the plant in question is materially different in other respects. 1st, in the constantly unequal proportion of its stamina. d, in its corolla, and 3d, in the form of its seed.

However the most remarkable character of all, is to be found in the proportion of its stamina, always to the number of three, the two smaller of which are drawn together by a round yellow anthera inserted at the orifice of the tube; and are always sheltered as it were by a different division of the larger ones, coloured more internally than the others at its base, which may be regarded as a sort of nectarium; the third stamen is longer, having the same point of insertion, but opposite to the two others. Its anthera is oblong of a dirty white. All the three stamina are fertile. This very particular character has determined me to make a new genus of the plant, at the same time it has furnished me with a name that appears perfectly applicable, *Heterandra*. I would willingly have continued the name of Bartonia, by which I am told it was sent to England, in honour of Dr. Barton, whose knowledge and zeal in the study of nature are already known to you; but, besides that I have always thought the names of men no ways applicable to plants, it appears to me more proper to give it such a name as may designate the particular character which essentially distinguishes this plant from all others. Formerly, and even now, we are still in the habit of giving proper names that are void of signification to plants. If this custom had gone no farther than using the names of those men who have been useful to science it might have been tolerated; but now that pretenders to science claim the same honour, it is unworthy the attention of men renowned for their genius and works. In fact, was it necessary that the names of Hippocrates, Tournefort, Linnæus, Jussieu,

and many others, should be given to plants in order to be transmitted to posterity? Or was it proper that such men should be classed with those who hardly know botany by name, and yet have their names given to plants? The word *Heterandra* signifies two different kinds of stamens.

I finish this memoir by a comparative description of this plant and the *Pontederia*, which will enable you to decide on the justice of my observations, and may assist naturalists in fixing its proper place in the natural order.

Description of the Pontederia, according to Linnæus.

Spatha communis, oblonga latere dehiscens.

Corolla (calix Jussieu) monopetala, bipartita, tubulosa, labium superius rectum, tripartitum, exterius æquale. Labium inferius reflexum, tripartitum laciniis æqualibus.

Stamina, filaments sex corollæ inserta, quorum tria subulata, longiora ori tubi corollæ, tria reliqua basi ejusdem tubi inserta. Antheræ erectæ, oblongæ.

Pistillum germanum oblongum inferum aut superum. Stylus semplice, declinatus, stigma crassifolium.

Capsula carnosa, conica, apice lato inflexo, trilocularis, triangularis, trifulca.

Semina subrotunda, plurima.

Description of the Heterandra.

Spatha, ut in Pontederia, ex utriculo foliorum egrediens.

Corolla (calix Jussieu) monopetala, sexfida, subbipartita, tubulosa, infera, labium superius tripartitum, lacinia intermedia major, interior basi colorata, nectarii æmula; labium inferius tripartitum, lacinia intermedia augustior, reflexa.

Stamina, filaments tria corollæ inserta, quorum duo minoræ approximata ad basin laciñiæ nectarii æmuli, antheræ fulvæ rotundæ, altera longitudine styli distans, anthera oblonga pallida.

Pistillum, germanum ejusmodi sed semper superum.

Capsula, oblonga, trigona, trilocularis à latere dehiscens.

Semina oblonga utriusque obtusa, plurima.

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The annexed figure represents the other particularities and specific characters of the plant, which I shall call *Heterandra reniformis*.

(Signed) BEAUVOIS.

N^o. XXI.

A Letter from Colonel WINTHROP SARGENT, to Dr. BENJAMIN SMITH BARTON, accompanying Drawings and some Account of certain Articles, which were taken out of an ancient Tumulus, or Grave, in the Western-Country.

Cincinnati, N. W. Territory, Sep. 8th, 1794.

Read May 20, 1796. I HAVE the pleasure, my dear Sir, to transmit you a drawing of some matters more extraordinary than have heretofore come under my observation, in all the researches into the antiquities of this country. The multiplicity of my avocations leaves not leisure for more than rough delineations; and you must be contented to receive them in this style. I possess all the originals, and intend by some safe conveyance presenting them to the Philosophical Society, should they believe them of importance enough for a deposit of my disposition to promote the purposes of their institution. The drawing, perhaps, is too imperfect to stand the test of criticism, and it might not be prudent to hazard it to their view. Your judgment, however, should govern.*

It may be proper to add, that the body with which this collection was interred, was found lying in nearly a horizontal position, about five feet from the surface of the

* Since the date of this letter, the Philosophical Society have received the articles. From comparing them with the drawings, it appears that the latter are, in general, sufficiently correct. B. S. B.

earth,

